

REMARKS

Claims 11, 13 and 16-25 are pending in this application. Applicants appreciate the Office Action's indication that claims 18-21 contain allowable subject matter.

By this Amendment, claim 11 is amended to incorporate the subject matter recited in claims 12, 14 and 15. Accordingly, claims 12, 14 and 15 are canceled. Claims 13, 16-19 and 22 are amended to change the dependence in view of the cancellation of claims 12, 14 and 15. Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

Entry of the amendments is proper under 37 CFR §1.116 since the amendments: (a) place the application in condition for allowance (for the reasons discussed herein); (b) do not raise any new issue requiring further search and/or consideration (as the amendments merely incorporate the subject matter of dependent claims into independent claims; and (c) place the application in better form for appeal, should an appeal be necessary. Entry of the amendments is thus respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claims 11-17, 22 and 24 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 5,846,276 to Nagai et al. (hereinafter "Nagai") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,331,075 to Amer et al. (hereinafter "Amer"); rejects claim 25 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Nagai and Amer further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,730,421 to Kirino et al. (hereinafter "Kirino"); and rejects claims 11-17 and 23 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 5,693,685 to Kishimoto et al. (hereinafter "Kishimoto") in view of Amer. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

The Office Action admits that Nagai and Kishimoto do not disclose or suggest a method for measurement of thermal conductivity of a honeycomb structure, but asserts that Amer discloses a method for measuring thermal conductivity. The Office Action further asserts that the combination of Nagai or Kishimoto with Amer would have rendered obvious the subject matter recited in claim 11.

However, even if combined, Nagai, Kishimoto and Amer do not disclose or suggest the subject matter recited in claims 14 and 15, currently incorporated in claim 11.

The amended claim 11 recites that the two ends of the honeycomb structure and the two contact members are contacted with each other via high-thermal-conductivity members. Nagai and Kishimoto do not disclose or suggest this feature, as recognized in the Office Action. Also, Amer does not supply this subject matter lacking in Nagai and Kishimoto.

The "high-thermal-conductivity members" are an important feature recited in claim 11. The importance of this feature is described in the specification at, for example, Fig. 2 and page 8, line 6-page 10, line 2. As described, such a high-thermal-conductivity member reduces the gap between the contact members and the ends of the honeycomb structure caused by the fine surface unevennesses of the faces of the ends of the honeycomb structure and the faces of the contact members. (See specification at, for example, page 9, lines 18-25.) Thus, the high-thermal-conductivity members improve the thermal conduction between the contact members and the ends of the honeycomb structure. (See specification at, for example, page 9, lines 6-17.)

Amer does not disclose or suggest such a high-thermal-conductivity member. Amer discloses using two slabs 12 and 14 to sandwich species 16. (See Fig. 1 and col. 3, lines 49-64.) The slabs 12 and 14 correspond to the contact members recited in claim 11. Amer is not directed to honeycomb structures with uneven end faces. Amer does not recognize the need for a high-thermal-conductivity member to absorb the deviation derived from the unevenness of the end faces of a honeycomb structure. Thus, Amer does not even suggest the use of a high-thermal-conductivity member between the slabs and the specimen 16.

For at least the above reasons, Amer does not disclose or suggest a high-thermal-conductivity member between a contact member and an end of the honeycomb structure, as recited in claims 11. Therefore, Amer does not supply the subject matter

recognized in the Office Action as lacking in Nagai and Kishimoto. Also, Kirino does not supply this subject matter lacking in Nagai and Kishimoto.

For at least the above reasons, Nagai, Kishimoto, Amer and Kirino, either individually or in combination, do not disclose or suggest the subject matter recited in claim 11, and claims 13 and 16-25 depending therefrom. According, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 11, 13 and 16-25 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 11, 13 and 16-25 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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